

AB 858 (Goldberg)

California Racial Mascots Act



Updated 08/13/2003

Racial mascots and team nicknames perpetuate misinformation, engender racial division, and establish a hostile learning environment. California public schools must provide equal educational opportunity to all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin. Under current law, they are required to promote diversity and respect for different cultures.

Racially discriminatory school and team mascots and nicknames are inconsistent with school obligations. More than 120 California public schools have racially discriminatory school mascots. Racial mascots promote racial stereotyping. American Indian youth are forced to see themselves as warlike caricatures, devoid of value except as tokens. These stereotypes are inaccurate and destructive for all youth and have no place in public education.

Hundreds of organizations have issued resolutions denouncing the use of Native Americans as school mascots. Prominent organizations that have taken positions against racial mascots include the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, National Education Association, National Congress of American Indians, National Indian Education Association, Native American Journalists Association, MALDEF, the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), United Church of Christ, Los Angeles Unified School District, NAACP, American Jewish Committee, and the Intertribal Council of the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations.

State law is needed to eliminate racial mascots. Although many schools and colleges across the country have voluntarily changed their discriminatory names, nicknames or mascots, the decision to change is often preceded by a lengthy, costly and divisive local debate, during which Native American children and parents are the targets of blame and harassment. School and district administrators are often placed in the middle of such debates, fearing that they may lose their jobs if they make an unpopular decision.

Even mascots intended to honor Native American culture are harmful to children. As the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has stated, "When Indian imagery was first adopted for sports mascots it was not to offend Native Americans. However, the use of the imagery and traditions, no matter how popular, should end when they are offensive." Direction from the state of California will enable schools to act in the best interest of students.

AB 858 (Goldberg) would prohibit public schools from using school or athletic team names, mascots, or nicknames that are derogatory or discriminatory including: "Redskins," "Apaches," "Braves," "Chiefs," "Indians," "Comanches," "Papooses," any other Native American tribal name, "Warriors," if accompanied by Native American imagery or mascot, and "Sentinels," if accompanied by Native American imagery or mascot. The act does not apply to certain schools located with "Indian Country" provided that certain criteria are met.

http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/bill/asm/ab_0851-0900/ab_858_bill_20030220_introduced.html - FULL AB 858 TEXT

Implementation of AB 858 (Goldberg) will not require additional funds. Schools would have sufficient time to replace the items that depict the prohibited name and mascot. Schools can choose a new name and mascot immediately and simply replace items on the school's regular schedule.

AB 858 (Goldberg) is sponsored by the Alliance Against Racial Mascots (ALLARM), a statewide coalition formed by the Southern California Indian Center and the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT <http://www.allarm.org>
ALLARM 213-250-8787**

STATUS:

BILL HISTORY

2003

June 16 Reconsideration granted. (Page 2405.) To inactive file on motion of Assembly Member Goldberg.

June 12 Motion to reconsider continued until next Legislative day.

June 9 Motion to reconsider continued until next Legislative day.

June 5 Read third time, passage refused. (Ayes 37. Noes 31. Page 2329.) Motion to reconsider made by Assembly Member Goldberg.

May 29 From committee: Do pass. (Ayes 15. Noes 8.) (May 28). Read second time. To third reading.

May 7 In committee: Set, first hearing. Referred to APPR. suspense file.

Apr. 24 From committee: Do pass, and re-refer to Com. on APPR. Re-referred. (Ayes 6. Noes 4.) (April 23).

Apr. 21 Re-referred to Com. on ED.

Apr. 10 From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to Com. on ED. Read second time and amended.

Mar. 3 Referred to Com. on ED.

Feb. 23 From printer. May be heard in committee March 25.

Feb. 20 Read first time. To print.